

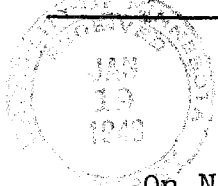
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PALESTINE: APPLE OF DISCORD

by William Henry Chamberlin



On November 26, just seven weeks ago, the United Nations Assembly recorded its majority decision to partition Palestine. An undeclared civil war has been the immediate result, costing over 700 lives in those seven weeks. Acts of terrorism, Arab and Jewish, have received full publicity. Much less has been written about the resulting economic paralysis now rapidly ruining the country.

Palestine, only a little larger than New Jersey, is poor in natural resources and largely barren. It has a population of about 1,200,000 Arabs and 600,000 Jews. Political division is not an ideal destiny for such a country. Partitioning accompanied by civil war will soon reduce the economic life of all but the agrarian communities to chaos.

The projected Jewish state is grotesquely chopped into three sectors, an area along the Mediterranean coast, Eastern Galilee and a large stretch of the Negeb desert, in the south. The proposed Arab state is a little more compact, but is also cut into three parts by intersecting Jewish boundary lines which separate the compact Arab region in the interior of Palestine, between the Dead Sea and the plain, from the other Arab districts.

With the best will in the world it would be difficult to avoid friction, given the arrangement attempted. Under conditions of active hostility, the crisscross division simply means that no part of the country can feel secure. But unpromising as partition is, no other alternative seemed feasible to the majority of members of the United Nations Commission, which made a report after investigating the situation in Palestine last summer.

Theoretically, Palestinian unity could have maintained in the form of a Jewish state, an Arab state or a bi-national state. However, the Arab majority could scarcely be expected to accept the rule of a Jewish minority. The Jewish minority would have felt unsafe and stunted in opportunities for development under the rule of an Arab majority. A bi-national unified state would have possessed obvious advantages. Although some Jewish moderates like Dr. Judah Magnes, President of the

Hebrew University in Jerusalem, favored this idea to the end, the differences of viewpoint between the two communities were so great that no basis for an agreement along these lines could be found.

II

However strong partisan feeling on the subject, the Jewish-Arab issue in Palestine is not clear-cut, between right and wrong. It is one of those clashes between sincerely held conceptions of right, always hardest to solve on any basis of agreement and accommodation.

The hold of Zionism on Jewish sympathy throughout the world is wholly understandable. There was the deep appeal, at once religious and nationalistic, of rebuilding Eretz Israel, the Land of Israel, on soil hallowed by association with Jewish tradition and history. There was pride in the successful return of young Jews to the land, in the flourishing farm colonies that have grown up in Palestine during the past thirty years.

But the strongest emotional argument for Zionism today is the fearful tragedy that overtook European Jewry during the war. It is not surprising that hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors in Europe display stubborn determination to make their way to Palestine. And this feeling that only in Palestine can Jews find security and the opportunity to build a new life has tipped the scales in favor of Zionism in the minds of many American Jews who were formerly doubtful about this movement, with its possible compromising effect on the status of Jews who are citizens of other countries.

For various reasons the Zionist cause has won some articulate sympathy among non-Jewish Americans. There is admiration for the achievements of the Jewish pioneers. There is perhaps a subconscious feeling that support of Zionism is an easier way to assuage conscience than is advocacy of a more liberal American immigration policy. Moreover, the Jewish vote is a factor in American national and local politics, especially in New York; the Arab vote is not.

An important fact is sometimes overlooked in America, although not by Americans with an intimate knowledge of the Arab world. The Arabs have a case in Palestine, and are just as convinced of its rightness as the Zionists are of theirs. The Arabs have also shown themselves just as ready to back up by terrorism what they consider a just cause.

The Arabs, about ninety per cent Moslem, about ten per cent Christian, were an overwhelming majority of the population in Palestine at the time of the Balfour Declaration. After thirty years of Jewish migration, sharply restricted by the much denounced White Paper, of 1939, the Arabs still constitute two thirds of the inhabitants of Pales-

tine. They came into the country as conquerors in the Seventh Century A. D. and have remained ever since.

The Arabs maintain that their culture and way of life will be swamped by mass Jewish immigration, supported by American capital. They contend that the problem of the uprooted and displaced Jews is international in scope, and should not be settled at their expense.

III

It is often argued in pro-Zionist quarters that the masses of Palestinian Arabs have benefited from the influx of Jewish colonists, that the level of wages has been raised and that the standard of living is higher than in neighboring Arab countries. These contentions may be true; but they do not go to the emotional heart of the problem.

The typical Palestine Arab nationalist is no more reconciled to the idea of a Jewish state, by the spectacle of irrigation or improved farming methods in Jewish collective farms, than the Indian or Indonesian nationalist was impressed by the material benefits which British and Dutch rule brought to those countries. The widespread bitterness of the present picture refutes the comfortable assumption that only a few selfish Arab landlords are opposed to Zionism.

A majority of Palestinian Arabs live in a primitive patriarchal social order. They follow the lead of their religious and secular notables, and of their small intelligentsia, more unquestioningly than a people with a higher standard of literacy and education might do. Friendly relations have prevailed between Arab and Jewish communities and between individual Arabs and Jews. But now that the issue has been forced there is little reason to doubt that the Arabs, a large minority in the projected Jewish state, will follow their nationalist leadership and use every method of direct and indirect resistance.

Jewish nationalism has been powerfully stimulated by the appalling pogroms in Europe, unparalleled in horror even during the Middle Ages. But Arab nationalism has also been growing apace during the interval between the two wars. Palestine is a small enclave in a large Arab world. Palestinian Arabs can count on at least indirect aid from the neighboring Arab states, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Trans-Jordania, Egypt, Saudi Arabia.

IV

So long as British troops remain in Palestine there will be some limitations on the scope of the Arab-Jewish feud. If only out of consideration for their own security, the British will not allow large-scale fighting for the possession of strategic towns and districts.

For thirty years the British have been trying, with decreasing success, to administer Palestine effectively on the basis of a mandate from the League of Nations. The supposed guide to this administration was the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, in which the American government concurred. The wording was as ambiguous as a Delphic oracle:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The Balfour Declaration uses the word "home" instead of the more definite "state". In any case the Arabs, who were not consulted, would not be willing to accept its authority.

The British position in Palestine has become increasingly difficult because of the intensive campaign of Jewish terrorism let loose during the last two years. Coping with the well-organized illegal immigration was an ungrateful problem which led inevitably to regrettable incidents.

The British have announced their intention to quit Palestine by May 15. They will not assume any responsibility of implementing the UN decision for partition. Unless some unforeseen saving solution is produced from some quarter, UN will therefore shortly face a major crisis on the Palestine issue. If civil war flares up all over Palestine, if this is accompanied by open or covert intervention from adjacent Arab states, how is the UN to enforce respect for its decision?

There has been talk, but only talk so far, of a militia to be recruited from some of the smaller states. But it may well be that only United States and Russian troops will be available. Given the present atmosphere in American-Soviet relations, is the prospect for co-operation in Palestine any better than it is in Germany, Austria, Korea, or Greece? Unilateral American intervention in Palestine could be blocked by the Soviet veto. Washington certainly would not welcome unilateral Soviet intervention.

Soviet acquiescence in partition was applauded by those who did not see that the Soviet Government was thereby dealing itself a share of influence in a strategic area from which it had previously been excluded. Now it is beginning to be realized that Palestine is a problem which will not be resolved by electioneering speeches in the United States.

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By Frank C. Hanighen

January 14, 1948

The inside story of what is going on in Palestine, say reliable Government sources, is in every newspaper. But the pattern of decisive happenings has been overlooked by commentators because it has been obscured by the horrifying descriptions of bombings and killings. The atrocities are not the "real story". By far the most important development is the creeping paralysis in the country's economic life (which Mr. Chamberlin mentions in this week's Analysis).

Arabs set up road blocks between communities, or (as in the case of the Old City in Jerusalem) between parts of cities; cutting off, or cutting down, delivery of food and other goods. They hold up motor caravans and trains; unload the goods; carry them away. As a result, the whole fabric of internal trade and commerce has been badly damaged.

One of the consequences is that imports of goods from abroad have begun to back up in the harbors of Haifa, Jaffa and Tel Aviv. With interruption of internal communications, warehouses in the ports are overflowing and excess goods are placed on lighters in the harbors. Further intensifying the transport situation, gasoline supplies have dropped, due to the strike in the Haifa refinery. After the recent massacres of Jewish and Arab employees, the refinery was shut down. Finally, the postal system has been considerably impaired in some localities; the week's shut-down of the Jerusalem post office is an example. With failure to deliver mail, business slows down. And so it goes.

If the Arabs have planned it this way, they are clever; if not, Allah seems to be on their side. Their "economic war" works slowly but surely, and without unfavorable publicity. The Jewish "military war" gets the headlines, but the benefits derived from casualty lists is questionable. The Jews hardly gain much credit from such atrocities as the bombing of innocents in the Semiramis Hotel. Meanwhile, the economic slowdown affects mainly the modern Jewish communities, rather than the small, self-sufficient Arab villages.

The economic war, of course, is deplorable; but it is viewed as less productive of permanent racial bitterness and damage than the military warfare. Therefore, in the apparently hopeless picture today, this lesser evil seems to offer a chance of a settlement, and might conceivably force both sides to a conference table. At any rate, the economic factor appears likely to give quite a new turn to the situation.

* * * * *

The great game of politics, particularly in a general election year, is unfortunately not played in strict accordance with the principles advocated in such scriptures as The Federalist. It seems unwise, therefore, to analyze the strength of the Wallace movement purely from the standpoint of whether or not Labor voters will respond to the "liberal" invocations addressed to them by Truman or Wallace. It was suggested (NMG, December 23, 1947) that Democratic machine bosses might revert to the old practice of double-crossing the national ticket in order to maintain their hold on local offices; and that such intrigues might transcend in importance voter feelings about issues. There seem to be some grounds for believing that local political bosses are up to these tricks.

A shrewd observer of Chicago politics tells this column that the old game is being played this way in Cook County. Mayor Kennelly, Democrat, is trying to run Chicago on "good government" lines. Mr. Arvey, successor to Boss Kelly, is becoming rather impatient with Kennelly's policy, particularly as it affects some 1500 municipal jobs which the Mayor insists on keeping vacant. Mr. Kennelly wants to

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save the money; Mr. Arvey wants to fill jobs and get votes. And the latter consequently utters sentiments calculated to chill the spines of the Democratic GHQ.

If the "shrewd observer" is correct, Mr. Arvey has done more than talk. It is believed that a deal has already been made between the GOP and Democratic bosses in Cook County. The Democrats have put forward Adlai Stevenson as candidate for Governor and Professor Paul Douglas as candidate for Senator. Whatever else may be said about these two men, they can hardly be called good "vote-getters". A dozen other well-known Democrats could draw more voters to the polls. The Republican opponents, Dwight Green and C. Wayland Brooks, are vote-getters. Presumably the GOP will put up weak candidates for local offices. And Democratic precinct leaders may show less than fanatical zeal in pushing the name of Harry S. Truman for President. We offer this instructive exhibit as a caution to those who too easily assume that the "class line" of Truman will march unimpeded to triumph.

And to those Republicans who are chuckling immoderately over the Wallace candidature, the following news may serve as a reminder that all is not yet "in the bag". Professor Homer Carey, the white hope of the Chicago "progressive" party, may not line up with that presumably Left Wing organization. Carey wants the State's Attorney office. If he throws in his lot with the Wallace progressives, he will lose, but will help the progressive ticket. If he runs independently, he might win, as a result of voter disgust with the antics of the Democratic and Republican bosses. The third party situation in Chicago is by no means clear at this date.

* * * * *

Much concern has arisen over the new phase of the Nuremberg trials. In the dock are a number of German civil servants who served the Hitler regime. Prominent among these is Ernst von Weizsaecker, once Undersecretary of the Foreign Office and later Ambassador to the Vatican. Weizsaecker was among those German diplomats (see HUMAN EVENTS, April 3, 1946) who did hold office under Hitler but who worked in various ways to undermine his policies and his regime. The charges against him appear highly dubious to many in international diplomatic circles.

Additionally, it is emphasized that von Weizsaecker is the only civil servant who was present at the crucial negotiations between Von Ribbentrop and Molotov, before and during the period of the Soviet-Nazi honeymoon (1939-41). As possessor of evidence on this important phase of history, it would seem advisable to exempt him from the present legal process.

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There is mounting criticism about the "handful of pardons" dispensed by President Truman during the holidays to violaters of the Selective Service Act. Mr. Truman pardoned only 1,523 of the 15,805 violaters. It had been hoped that he would issue a general amnesty. Clarence E. Pickett, of the American Friends Service Committee, has made a statement regretting that the holiday pardons "stopped short of two groups of violaters. These are the men whose objections were based on philosophical and ethical grounds, rather than religious ones, and the Jehovah's Witnesses who asked to be granted ministerial status." And Norman Thomas pointed out: "It is interesting to note that former Justice Roberts, Chairman of the Amnesty Board, is also Chairman of the Citizens Committee for Universal Military Training. The bill in Congress, which his Committee supports, HR 4278, for peacetime conscription would grant exemption from military training only along the narrow lines on which pardons have been granted."

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Business Briefs ---- The announcement of the discovery of a new West Texas oil field has touched off again the controversy about whether or not we are "running out of oil". The discovery fortifies the case of those who claim that the conti-

mental United States contains plenty of oil for our needs; and that if wildcatting does not face discouraging price and fiscal conditions, it will bring in many new fields.

---- We obtained reliable information this week that the I.T. and T. has sold its Mexican subsidiary to Mr. Axel Wenner-gren, Swedish industrialist and financier. The State Department has cleared the deal, and the Mexican Government approves. Last week, it was announced that Wenner-gren had purchased the Ericsson phone company, I.T. and T.'s competitor in Mexico. Therefore, the colorful international business figure emerges with a monopoly of Mexican telephone communications.

---- Economists in the Capital are talking about two significant developments in the last few weeks. (1) Consolidated Edison Company of New York postponed its plans for permanent financing through the sale of debentures and preferred stock, and instead decided upon a \$70 million issue of one-year bank notes. (2) New York State has been planning the sale of \$300 million long term bonus bonds, but has now asked bids on \$100 million of short-term notes callable in 3 months. These happenings are deemed significant of the unfavorable new issue market which is forcing, in face of a strong demand for capital, the increased use of bank credit in place of long-term financing through the sale of bonds and stocks. This situation throws further light on the nature of inflationary processes.

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From a broadcast by Felix Morley on the Sunoco Three-Star Extra program over NBC on January 6, 6:45 EST: "In the Congressional Directory for January, 1928, the Department of State took one page. In the issue for January, 1938, the Department of State took two pages. In the issue for January, 1948, the one just published, the Department of State takes twelve pages. These twelve pages contain only the names of the higher officers in the Department of State, here in Washington. They don't include any State Department official stationed outside Washington. These twelve pages are just a directory of top-flight officials, at headquarters. There's scarcely anybody in the list with a salary of less than six thousand dollars a year.

"Some of the titles certainly seem to justify a big salary. Here's one: 'Chief of the Acquisition and Distribution Division of the Office of Intelligence Collection and Dissemination of the Department of State.' You don't believe me? Check it up -- page 330 of the new Congressional Directory.

"Here's another title: 'Chief of the Division of International and Functional Intelligence of the Office of Intelligence Research of the Department of State', page 329. I couldn't have thought that title up myself. I'm too innocent. I really tried to find out why the State Department has to have one office for Intelligence Research and a wholly separate Office of Intelligence Collection and Dissemination. They told me, but I didn't understand the explanation. I think maybe the reason for those two offices is to justify another, called the Division of Foreign Policy Correlation.

"It's important to keep this straight. You must realize that the Division of Foreign Policy Correlation is wholly different from another office, called Special Political Affairs. You can see that Special Political Affairs is important because of its staff. It has a Director; and a Deputy Director; also a Special Deputy Director, and a Special Assistant to the Director and then somebody called an Executive Officer in addition."

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No Comment Department. "When Franklin D. Roosevelt was in the White House his words could be depended upon. Although he had many shortcomings, demagogy was not among them." -- from a piece by William Z. Foster, National Chairman of the Communist Party in the United States, in the Daily Worker, January 12, 1948.

Book Events

England: A History of the Homeland, by Henry Hamilton, M. A., D. Litt. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. \$6.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

This is not as easy, nor as agreeable, a book to read as Professor G. N. Trevelyan's English Social History, which covers substantially the same ground. For one thing, Professor Hamilton has a rather graceless and turgid manner of writing; for another, the book is printed, not in letterpress, but by some planographic process as is the case with many illustrated books nowadays, and this gives to the text a rather bleak and ghastly appearance. But perhaps the main difference is that, where Professor Trevelyan was concerned mainly with describing the evolution of everyday life in England over the course of six centuries as matter of interest in itself, Professor Hamilton is at pains to prove that social and economic forces have had far greater influence in determining the course of history than all the speculations of theorists, or all the contests for power between dynasties or political parties. Accordingly, he traces this influence in terms of diet, dress, health and sanitation, population, education, commerce, the relation of the sexes, legal codes and moralities, and political ideologies and institutions. And indeed he does make it clear that purely political events have been of slight or of secondary consequence, as compared to such developments as the growth of the towns, the rise of the wool weaving industry, the expansion of overseas commerce, the innovations in agriculture, and the progressive divisions of labor. It is also made clear that every great step in the direction of what we call progress has been purchased at the price of much human degradation and misery, extended over generations.

Thus we are able to note that Medieval England was free of nearly all the characteristic evils of our own world. Nationalism, for example, with its paranoiac suspicions and suicidal ambitions, was unknown, or existed only in an embryonic phase. The psychology of the people was at once cosmopolitan and parochial. That is, they thought of themselves as members of Christendom and as inhabitants of a particular village or shire. The great disorders we associate with a money economy, and with the profit motive in production, were likewise absent. There were no booms and depressions, no unemployment. Poverty in the sense of absolute indigence was so slight a problem that it could be solved simply and humanely by a few charitable endowments, and, since prosperity and virtue had not yet been equated, alms could be given without arrogance and accepted without disgrace.

And yet poverty, as distinguished from what we call economic insecurity, was by our standards, then, almost universal. If the life of the medieval man was undisturbed by fluctuations of markets and currencies, it was nevertheless affected by the vagaries of nature to a degree unknown in a world of swift communications. The poorer classes lived under continual threat of famine; in the best of times all classes suffered, especially in winter, from scurvy and other nutritional diseases; the high-born perhaps even more than the simple because of their disdain of such plebeian foods as milk and cheese. The death rate was tremendous, especially among children, and this had the effect of keeping the population relatively static.

What destroyed the social organization of the middle ages was the Black Death. It resulted in a scarcity of agricultural labor, which, by obliging landowners to bid against each other replaced the feudal principle of status and customary service by one of wages and free contract. Many lords found it profitable to convert their lands into pasturage. The lands fell into the hands of speculators also greedy for the profits of the wool trade. Thus began those wholesale evictions and enclosures which continued from early Tudor times to the Eighteenth Century, creating that problem of pauperism which remains unsolved after four hundred years of workhouses, poor laws and Socialistic experiments.